

CHAPTER 3

A Diversified Strategy

The last chapter concluded that available funding and projects currently slated for funding will not be enough to maintain the present level of mobility in Alameda County. The quality of transportation service will worsen unless Alameda County pursues a broader range of strategies for ensuring our continued ability to get from Point A to Point B—a plan that uses investment in concert with pricing, road space, transit, system management, and land-use regulation.

This chapter proposes a diversified strategy of transportation improvement. A broader approach is appropriate for Alameda County because it is more cost-effective than investment alone, and because it can be tailored to fit the conditions and circumstances found in each part of the county.

A DIVERSIFIED STRATEGY

The strategy proposed here reflects the essential lessons that policymakers have learned about

transportation since World War II. The first of these lessons is that even slow-growing communities require continuing investment in transportation projects and facilities. Thus, continuing investment and reinvestment are necessary elements of any strategy of transportation improvement in Alameda County.

The second lesson is that the appropriate mix of transportation services and transportation improvements depends on local conditions and local needs. As shown in Chapter 2, different communities require a different mix of transportation services, and cost-effective results are most likely to be achieved when investments are tailored to fit the circumstances of time and place.

Transit investments are most likely to significantly relieve congestion in older urban communities and in the corridors linking them with the suburbs—markets with enough people to support well-patronized services. An investment program that includes boulevard

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construction and operating buses on major roadways can be cost-effective in both suburban and urban settings. Carpools and express bus service can make a significant contribution to personal mobility in corridors that connect suburbs to one another. Each of these improvements—boulevards, parkways, transit service and HOV lanes—should be used to supplement the capacity of the freeway system where each is most appropriate.

The third lesson to be learned from recent experience is that a community's investment requirements change as it grows toward build-out. As build-out approaches—when there is no more vacant land left to develop in an area—suburban cities must figure out how to maximize efficient use of existing road space, and make a commitment to maintaining existing facilities. But they also need to plan for areas of density—residential and commercial—that will support transit use. That means complementary zoning. Then transit investments can provide the transportation access necessary to serve those clusters of dense activity.

The fourth lesson is that a transportation system that works requires balanced attention to the requirements of freight and passenger movement. With population and employment

growing, ongoing highway improvements are necessary to maintain the efficiency of moving freight and distributing goods—particularly in those corridors where truck movements are concentrated. In many cases, operational improvements may offer a superior alternative to major construction.

The fifth lesson is that the diversity of transportation needs found in a metropolitan area cannot be met without flexible funding sources that allow policymakers to tailor improvement programs to fit local needs and decide how best to spend those funds.

The final lesson is that investment alone does not offer the most cost-effective strategy for meeting transportation needs. Investment is most cost-effective when it is coupled with policies designed to manage the transportation system, including road space and transit operations; pricing policies to reduce congestion, encourage ridesharing and transit use; and coordinated transportation and land-use planning.

These lessons of experience should guide the Alameda County CMA as it makes the strategic choices necessary to create a balanced transportation system to serve the needs of the

next generation. Two of these lessons are critically important for Alameda County:

- The countywide plan must reconcile the requirements of freight and passenger movement, and
- Cost-effective results are most likely when investment is coupled with policies designed to price congestion, manage road space and complement land use.

THE ELEMENTS OF THE DIVERSIFIED STRATEGY

The diversified strategy for Alameda County consists of seven component elements:

- An investment program with the flexibility to finance street, highway and mass transit projects—so that each can be employed where it offers the most cost-effective method of transportation improvement;
- A commitment to equity in funding that ensures that each of the county's four planning areas enjoys a level of investment that reflects its share of the countywide population;
- Funding policies designed to ensure enough funding for the maintenance, operation and

operational improvement of existing facilities and services;

- Funding policies designed to ensure efficient operation of those facilities that are essential for freight movement;
- Cooperative planning designed to engage city, county, CMA and state authorities in planning for corridor/area traffic management;
- Planning guidelines designed to ensure strategic treatment of hubs, gateways and intermodal terminals; and
- Pricing policies designed to reconcile mobility and air quality.

The CMA's investment program—and the additional revenue sources necessary to fund it—will be presented in Chapters 5 and 6. The CMA's funding policies, planning guidelines and a series of pricing alternatives will be presented in Chapter 4.

